



**LINKS**  
**ACADEMY**  
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

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# SEND Policy

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March 2023

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# LINKS MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

## Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy Mar 2023

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Committee: Academy Academic Improvement Committee (AAIC)

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Review Date: March 2024

### Amendments

Periodically the Senior Leadership Team and Board of Trustees will add to or revise the content within this policy. Any revision made are noted below.

Edition	Date	Revision made by	Content revised
1.0	03.03.20	Gemma Nash	Updated to MAT
2.0	07.05.21	Gemma Nash	No significant update
3.0	01.05.22	Gemma Nash	No significant update
4.0	15.03.23	Gemma Nash	

*Please note that for the purpose of this policy, the following terminology will apply:*

Headteacher	Head of School, Headteacher, Executive Head
Trust	Links Multi Academy Trust
School	Links Academy St Albans/ Links Academy Hatfield/Cedars

## 1. Aims

Our SEND policy and information report aims to:

- set out how our trust will support and make provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEND)
- explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for pupils with SEND

The Trustees and staff of Links Multi Academy Trust recognise that many students at some point in their school career have special educational needs which may require support. Arrangements are made to identify and provide support for these needs in order to empower our students to achieve success and to develop a level of independence and inner confidence which enables them to come to terms with and overcome potential barriers to learning.

Links Multi Academy Trust aims to embrace the needs of all students by providing:

- A broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum relevant to the needs of each individual
- Maximum possible access to and stimulus within the National Curriculum
- An environment where no student suffers adverse discrimination on the grounds of emotional, physical or social difficulties
- Personalised learning provision to support every student
- A named Mental Health lead to support and develop emotional well being
- A named Autism lead to develop the provision for students with an ASD diagnosis

Links Multi Academy Trust adopts a whole school approach to special education needs (SEND) based on the principle that all teachers are teachers of children with special educational needs. The majority of young people who attend the Links arrive with identified needs and are on the SEND register in their previous settings.

All teaching staff deliver their subject in line with National Curriculum. All staff aim to provide effective opportunities for all students by:

- setting suitable learning challenges
- responding to student's diverse learning needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.

Our day to day SEND provision is co-ordinated by the SENCo in each setting. It follows recommendations in the November 2014 version of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice*. Our Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy also reflects our statutory duties introduced by the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001.

Teachers and Support Workers at Links receive regular training in the area of special needs. Any additional training identified by teachers and support workers is provided through the school's funding for in-service training.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy and information report is based on the statutory [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#) and the following legislation:

- [Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#), which sets out schools' responsibilities for pupils with SEN and disabilities
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#), which set out schools' responsibilities for education, health and care (EHC) plans, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the SEN information report

## 3. Definitions

A pupil has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

They have a learning difficulty or disability if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- A disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools

Special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools.

We consider that we are making special educational provision when the provision is additional to or different from that made for the student's peers. In line with recommendations in the Code of Practice, we use a graduated approach to providing support using normal whole-school monitoring and measurement processes to identify difficulties.

Our processes for identification, assessment and provision for children with special educational needs are covered in more detail in monitoring arrangements, below.

We recognise that all our students may need special educational help at some stage in their education. Special provision usually means differentiated delivery, resources, class work, and is usually managed by teachers and support workers. We record details of difficulties, provision, strategies and targets on each student's profile. These are reviewed on a half termly basis with students and parents/carers regularly.

All classes have small group sizes which enables precise and targeted support for learning. Occasionally, if needed, students may be withdrawn to work 1-1 or be assessed. Group sizes vary from 1-1 to up to 1-6.

## **Disability**

Under the amendments made to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and the Equality Act 2010, we acknowledge the following:

- our duty not to treat a disabled student less favourably, without justification, for a reason that applies to their disability. (See policy Access to Education Policy for Children & Young People Unable to Attend School for Medical Reasons)
- our duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled students are not put at a substantial disadvantage compared with students who are not disabled.
- our duty to plan strategically and make progress in increasing accessibility to schools' premises and curriculum is provided to disabled students.

Some students who have a disability will have a 'care plan'. The care plan will be drawn up with the collaboration of the student and his or her parents, health services, school nurse, other involved professionals including the SENCo. The plan is agreed and signed by the parents and by the child and reviewed as and when necessary, but at least once a year. The plan will give full details of the nature of the support to be given, who is to give it, resources needed, advice taken, contact numbers and clear procedures to be followed. All relevant staff will be made aware of the contents of the plan.

Where children have a disability which impacts mainly and directly on their learning, for example Autistic Spectrum disorder (ASD), a visual or hearing impairment, advice will be sought from the relevant advisory service, and recorded on the student Baseline and Arbor.

## **4. Roles and responsibilities**

### **4.1 The SENCO**

The SENCO is:

- Gemma Nash – Links Academy St Albans
- Michelle Bruce– Links Academy Hatfield

They will:

- work with the headteacher and SEND trustee to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school
- have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this SEND policy and the co-ordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEND, including those who have EHC plans
- provide professional guidance to colleagues and work with staff, parents, and other agencies to ensure that pupils with SEND receive appropriate support and high-quality teaching
- advise on the graduated approach to providing SEND support
- advise on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively
- be the point of contact for external agencies, especially the local authority and its support services
- liaise with potential next providers of education to ensure pupils and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned

- work with the headteacher and governing board to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- ensure the school keeps the records of all pupils with SEND up to date

#### **4.2 The SEN trustee**

The SEND Trustee will:

- help to raise awareness of SEND issues at governing board meetings
- monitor the quality and effectiveness of SEND and disability provision within the school and update the trustees on this
- work with the headteacher and SENCO to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school

#### **4.3 The headteacher**

The headteacher will:

- work with the SENCO and SEND governor to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in the school
- have overall responsibility for the provision and progress of learners with SEND and/or a disability

#### **4.4 Class teachers**

Each class teacher is responsible for:

- the progress and development of every pupil in their class
- working closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching
- working with the SENCO to review each pupil's progress and development and decide on any changes to provision
- ensuring they follow this SEND policy

### **5. SEND Information report**

#### **5.1 The kinds of SEND that are provided for**

Our school currently provides additional and/or different provision for a range of needs, including:

- Communication and interaction, for example, autistic spectrum disorder, speech and language difficulties
- Cognition and learning, for example, dyslexia, dyspraxia,
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties, for example, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Sensory and/or physical needs, such as sensory processing difficulties.

#### **5.2 Identifying pupils with SEND and assessing their needs**

In this, we recognise that provision for students with SEND should match the nature of their needs and that there should be regular recording of action and outcome. Many students with SEND will have had their need for differentiated provision identified at primary/secondary school. The Links has very good communication systems with feeder schools to ensure information sharing and passing on of work. Our Outreach Team work with students in feeder schools and support them back after a time spent at Links Multi Academy Trust

We will assess each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment on entry, which will build on previous settings and Key Stages, where appropriate. Class teachers will make regular assessments of progress for all pupils and identify those whose progress:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
- fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers
- widens the attainment gap

This may include progress in areas other than attainment, for example, social needs. Slow progress and low attainment will not automatically mean a pupil is recorded as having SEND.

When deciding whether special educational provision is required, we will start with the desired outcomes, including the expected progress and attainment, and the views and the wishes of the pupil and their parents. We will use this to determine the support that is needed and whether we can provide it by adapting our core offer, or whether something different or additional is needed.

All admissions to the Links are through referral to the Headteacher by other Headteachers, via Integration Panel chaired by a County Integration officer or as a result of a permanent exclusion. Upon entry all young people are assessed for learning difficulties, Access Arrangements if applicable, baselined for starting points and assessed for behavioural barriers. The induction process is completed with parental and student involvement.

### **5.3 Consulting and involving pupils and parents**

Links emphasises the importance of developing a partnership with parents in meeting the needs of each student and it actively encourages parental support and participation. This is reflected in our school logo. We acknowledge that parents have a right to contribute to the decision making process when determining their child's special educational needs provision. We understand that parents and carers play a critical role in the education of their children and the development of positive attitudes towards learning, behaviour and relationships. Links involves all parents as much as possible including:

- on-going discussions of progress by teachers, support workers and the SENCo/Headteacher
- home-School Agreements
- joint development of strategies to support development
- participation in annual reviews and parent consultation events
- celebration events

When appropriate the individual students are enabled and encouraged to participate in all decision-making processes that occur in education including:

- setting learning targets and contributing to their student profiles
- contributing to the assessment of their needs
- contributing to the annual review

#### **5.4 Assessing and reviewing pupils' progress towards outcomes**

We will follow the graduated approach and the four-part cycle of assess, plan, do, review. The class or subject teacher will work with the SENCO to carry out a clear analysis of the pupil's needs. This will draw on:

- The teacher's assessment and experience of the pupil
- Their previous progress and attainment and behaviour
- Other teachers' assessments, where relevant
- The individual's development in comparison to their peers and national data
- The views and experience of parents
- The pupil's own views
- Advice from external support services, if relevant

The assessment will be reviewed regularly. All teachers and support staff who work with the pupil will be made aware of their needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided, and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required. We will regularly review the effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress. This can be defined in a number of ways. For example, it might be progress which:

- closes the attainment gap between the student and their peers
- prevents the attainment gap growing wider
- is similar to that of peers starting from the same attainment baseline, but less than that of the majority of peers.
- matches or betters the student's previous rate of progress
- ensures access to the full curriculum
- demonstrates an improvement in self-help, social or personal skills
- demonstrates improvements in the student's behaviour
- is likely to lead to accreditation
- is likely to lead to participation in further education

***Progress is reported and reviewed regularly by Trustees***

#### **5.5 Supporting pupils moving between phases and preparing for adulthood**

- We will share information with the school, college, or other setting the pupil is moving to. We will agree with parents and pupils which information will be shared as part of this.
- We liaise with home and schools and offer additional meetings, visits, preparation and Outreach for students to transition to and from The Links.
- Our students take part in taster days at colleges, meetings about apprenticeships with additional support to attend interview.
- Through discussions with the students and parents/carers and Services for Young People advisors we identify short, medium and long term desired outcomes and consider the long term aspiration of young people.



- We incorporate the teaching of basic key skills necessary for a successful educational career and future adult life.
- We offer social skill interventions for students who need additional support for transition.
- We work closely with outside agencies to ensure that students leaving The Links are well prepared for their next placement and life beyond our school community.
- KS4 students are offered Work experience and an opportunity to carry out College placements.

## **5.6 Our approach to teaching pupils with SEND**

Links uses the 'graduated response' framework defined within the Code of Practice to manage intervention for students with SEND. Parents also have an opportunity to formally talk about support for students on Student Performance Review day (SPRD.) A one-page profile is created with Form Tutors/Parents and students termly during these meetings. Further meetings are arranged with parents and SENCo if students require Step 2 or 3 support.

This identifies three levels of intervention at which a child may receive provision which is additional to or different from that of his or her peers:

- Step 1: whole school provision – needs met through standard good teaching practice where the different and diverse needs and abilities of a class of pupils are handled by the class teachers and their assistants.
- Step 2: 'Additional need' specialist intervention – we seek advice from other people outside the school, for example a specialist teacher, an educational psychologist, a speech and language therapist or other health professionals.
- Step 3: Specialist Assessment – where we apply to the education department of Hertfordshire County Council for an assessment of a child's special educational needs based on specialist advice, with a view to getting access to special resources or support through an EHC plan.

Student profiles are stored on the school's information management system and are accessible to all teaching and support staff. Staff use them to record successful interventions, to share strategies and to plan differentiated provision within the classroom, solution focus meetings are calendared. Strategies are then shared with young people regularly, and parents.

## **5.7 Adaptations to the curriculum and learning environment**

- We meet the statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), 1995. See Accessibility Plan for additional information.
- We meet the statutory requirements of the Equalities Act (2010) through the Single Equalities Scheme (due for review 2016).
- Resources and teaching are differentiated according to individual student needs.
- We access support from outside agencies, such as advisory teachers, CAMHS, Educational Psychologist, Step Two, ADASH amongst others.
- Appropriate members of staff regularly take part in training and disseminate this as required.

## **5.8 Additional support for learning**

- Subject teachers adapt resources to meet individual needs.

- TAs – class based and specialist to work on specific learning/social development interventions.
- Adapted resources e.g. practical resources, displays, visual timetables.
- Support for students and parents from SENCo and Pastoral Team.
- Personalised support, based on assessment.
- **Mentoring support**
- Support from Outside Agencies (direct working and advice for staff).
- For further information on specific interventions, please refer to the Links School Offer available on the school's website.

### **5.9 Expertise and training of staff**

- Regular training, which is disseminated amongst all staff and is need based.
- Support from Outside Agencies to deliver whole staff/group/individual training e.g. Autism Education Trust training from specialist teacher, Touch Base Attachment and Trauma Informed practitioners
- All staff have STEPS training annually- a therapeutic approach to behaviour management.
- All staff, teaching and support, have regular Level 1 training in Child Protection.
- Regular team meetings and training sessions.
- Targeted training to meet individual specific needs, as required.
- A lead practitioner for Autism and Mental Health within the setting delivers training and support to staff.
- All staff have specific advice about strategies to support each child.
- Mental Health Support Team practitioner is based in school once weekly to signpost and support staff

### **5.10 Securing equipment and facilities**

The LEA allocates funding to the school for students with special educational needs. The main resource of the Centre is the staff but we also have a wide range of teaching materials and technological equipment which aids differentiated learning.

We also have assessment tools and packages for assessing underlying learning strengths and weaknesses and behavioural needs.

### **5.11 Evaluating the effectiveness of SEN provision**

The criteria for evaluating special needs provision at Links Multi Academy Trust includes feedback from students, parents, staff, the judgement of the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher as well as assessments of student's progress and inclusion using the student's profile. The centre also self-evaluates against the autism education trust standards (2016). The Governors regularly review the provision for children with SEN and consider the effectiveness of the work done by the school.

We evaluate the effectiveness of provision for pupils with SEN by:

- Reviewing pupils' individual progress towards their goals each term
- Reviewing the impact of interventions as appropriate
- Using pupil questionnaires

- Monitoring by the SENCO
- Using provision maps to measure progress
- Holding annual reviews for pupils with EHC plans

### **5.12 Enabling pupils with SEND to engage in activities available to those in the school who do not have SEND**

School trips and rewards visits are available and encouraged for all students at The Links throughout the year.

### **5.13 Support for improving emotional and social development**

We provide support for pupils to improve their emotional and social development in the following ways:

- The Outreach Team and school staff work with students on a 1-1 basis and in groups to develop social and emotional skills.
- All Extra-curricular activities are targeted to develop and enhance well-being.
- Specific interventions include, amongst others, social skills and PSHE programme covers a range of areas to promote well-being.
- The SENCO and Pastoral Leader facilitates communication to ensure all those working with the student, including the student themselves and the family, are aware of the support being implemented.
- The Pastoral Team supports parents and/or students as needed.
- Students are educated for the vast majority of the day in their class with peers, including opportunities for mixed-ability collaboration.
- Key workers are identified for students who need access to 1-1 emotional support.
- All students are provided with a Mentor and will have weekly 1:1 sessions to support emotional wellbeing.
- The Pastoral Team, key workers and form tutors are available for parents/carers to respond to queries, concerns and, on the rare occasion, any crisis.

### **5.14 Working with other agencies**

The Headteacher and Links staff have developed links with a wide range of outside agencies. The following agencies are consulted as and when needs arise:

- Educational Psychology Service
- Attendance Improvement Service
- Advisory Service (including advisory teachers for the Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, Ethnic Minorities, Language Support, Specific Learning Difficulties, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Disorders)
- Community Health Services (including School Nurse, School Medical Officer, Occupational Therapy)
- Children Schools and Families (CSF) including Social Services
- Services for Young people
- MAST (Multi Agency Support Team)
- NHS Foundation Trust- Mental Health Support Team

The Lead Practitioner acts as a point of contact for external agencies involved with the pupils. The Lead Practitioner has regular involvement in, access to, a network of other Lead Practitioners in the local area. Should a pupil be in receipt of or be given an EHC plan, their specified targets will be reflected in student profiles, SIMS and lesson plans. For EHC plans the SENCo will ensure that the Statutory Review process takes place in full collaboration with the local education authority.

Targets and details of special provision are recorded, reviewed regularly and used as part of the Statutory Review process.

### **5.15 Complaints about SEND provision**

In line with the Links Multi Academy Trust general complaints procedure the following action should be taken:

#### **Informally**

In the first instance complaints about Links Multi Academy Trust's special educational needs provision should be addressed to the SENCO. If the SENCO's response is felt to be unsatisfactory, complaints should then be addressed to the Headteacher.

#### **Formally**

If the Headteachers response is felt to be unsatisfactory, complaints should then be addressed to the Governing Body. If there is still dissatisfaction with the Governing Body's response, complaints should then be addressed to the LEA.

The parents of pupils with disabilities have the right to make disability discrimination claims to the first-tier SEND tribunal if they believe that our trust has discriminated against their children. They can make a claim about alleged discrimination regarding:

- Exclusions
- Provision of education and associated services
- Making reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services

### **5.16 Contact details of support services for parents of pupils with SEN**

The SENCO and Pastoral team provide advice and guidance to parents and carers and will also signpost the services below:

<https://www.hertssendiass.org.uk/home.aspx>

<https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/send/send-info/>

Gemma Nash (SENCo- St Albans) [gnash@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk](mailto:gnash@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk)

Michelle Bruce (SENCo-Hatfield) [mbruce@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk](mailto:mbruce@linksacademy.herts.sch.uk)

### **5.18 The local authority local offer**

Our contribution to the local offer is published here:

<https://www.linksacademy.herts.sch.uk/page/?title=SEN&pid=26>

Our local authority's local offer is published here:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/Local-Offer/The-Hertfordshire-Local-Offer.aspx>

## 6. Monitoring arrangements

The SENCO monitors the progress of SEND students every term and reports back to the headteacher and Trustees. They also liaise with the local authority to ensure suitable interventions and support for young people with SEND needs.

This policy will be reviewed by the Executive Headteacher of the Links Multi Academy Trust annually. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## Linked Policies

- Behaviour and Rewards Policies
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Equality and Diversity Scheme

## Policy Review – SEND

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Links Multi Academy Trust Trustees on an annual basis.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Academy Academic Improvement Committee and the Trustees in March 2023.

It is due for review in March 2024 up to 12 months from the above date.

Signature

Date

Executive Headteacher

Signature

Date

Chair of Trustees